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Message Text

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13
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
---------- 121995
O 221057Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1917

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TRIPOLI 0094

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR LY US
SUBJECT: LIBYAN APPROACH

REF: STATE 12949, TRIPOLI 1115, STATE 221657

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT WHAT IS NEEDED IF BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE TO IMPROVE IS EVIDENCE OF WILLINGNESS ON LIBYAN SIDE TO RAISE LEVEL OF "DIALOGUE", AND TURN IT ASIDE FROM PURELY MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS. GIVEN OUR DIFFERENCES ON THE MIDDLE EAST, MILITARY SALES BY US TO LIBYA ARE NOT SOUND BASIS FOR BETTER RELATIONS. WE THEREFORE PROPOSE VISIT HERE BY APPROPRIATE DEPT OFFICERS FOR TALKS CONCENTRATING ON ECONOMIC MATTERS, AND PARTICULARLY ENERGY POLICY, WHERE WE MAY HAVE SOME COMMON GROUND. IT MIGHT BE AGREED WITH LIBYANS BEFOREHAND THAT ASSUMING ATMOSPHERE OF TALKS HERE IS CONSTRUCTIVE AND NON-POLEMICAL, THEY COULD LEAD TO A RELEASE BY US OF C-130'S IN EXCHANGE FOR LIBYAN PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT THAT OIL EMBARGO HAS BEEN LIFTED AND THAT U.S. SHIPS ARE FREE TO TRADE AT LIBYAN PORTS. OTHER THINGS LIBYANS HAVE PROPOSED TO DO FOR US SHOULD NOT, IN OUR VIEW, BE LINKED TO C-130'S AND REACTOR. UNFORTUNATELY, WE SUSPECT THAT QADHAFI WANTS SOMETHING FOR NOTHING. END SUMMARY.

2. LIBYAN-U.S. TRADING OF SPECIFIC ITEMS ON QUID-PRO-QUO BASIS CAN BE IMPORTANT, BUT WE WANT TO DO THIS IN NEW ATMOSPHERE OF IMPROVED GENERAL RELATIONS. WHAT WE NEED
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FROM LIBYANS IS READINESS TO RAISE LEVEL OF SUBSTANCE OF

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DIALOGUE AS ENVISAGED IN STATE 221657. TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION PROPOSE APPROPRIATE DEPT OFFICIALS BE SENT TO TRIPOLI WITHOUT FANFARE TO DISCUSS DIFFERING U.S. AND LIBYAN POSITIONS ON BASIC PROBLEMS OF OIL AND MIDDLE EAST. THIS WOULD CONTINUE PROCESS OF BRIDGING THE GAP INITIATED BY TREASURY MINISTER RAJAB'S CALL ON UNDER SECRETARY SISCO IN OCT.

3. WE COULD TELL LIBYANS WE HOPE TO FIND COMMON GROUND BETWEEN US IN SUCH TALKS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER, PETROLEUM MINISTER, AND POSSIBLY PRIME MINISTER JALLUD. WHILE WE BELIEVE THERE ARE UNIDENTIFIED MODERATES AMONG LIBYAN OFFICIALS WHO WISH BETTER RELATIONS WITH US, QADHAFI IS KEY TO ANY SUCH MOVEMENT, AND IF VISIT WERE TO BE MADE BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON WE SHOULD PRESS FOR QUIET MEETING FOR HIM WITH CHAIRMAN QADHAFI.

4. TALKS COULD FOCUS ON TWO AREAS OF VITAL INTEREST TO BOTH U.S. AND LIBYA. ONE WOULD HAVE TO BE OUR DIFFERING POSITIONS AND INITIATIVES IN MIDDLE EAST, WHICH WOULD MAINLY BE TWO MONOLOGUES. IT WOULD HAVE TO BE UNDERSTOOD THAT OUTCOME OF DISCUSSION SHOULD NOT BE CONFRONTATION, BUT MOSTLY AGREEMENT TO DISAGREE. WE COULD FIND WHETHER THERE WAS ANY POSSIBILITY OF GETTING AT LEAST A PRIVATE RESPONSE TO MR. SISCO'S SUGGESTION (PARA 2, STATE 12949) REVEALING SMALL PORTION OF COMMON GROUND NOT PREVIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED, PERHAPS HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS OF MIDEAST PROBLEM.

5. MORE PROMISING AREA FOR BILATERAL EXCHANGE WITH LIBYANS WOULD BE ON ENERGY POLICIES. HAVING SKIRTED EMOTIONAL TERRITORY OF LIBYAN ATTITUDE TOWARD U.S. MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVES, BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS ON ENERGY AND CONSUMER-PRODUCER DIALOGUE COULD BE GOOD INDICATION OF HOW SERIOUS LIBYANS ARE. IF THEY WERE PREPARED TO HAVE REAL EXCHANGE WITH USG OFFICIAL WITHOUT POSTURING AND POLEMICS, THIS COULD BE EVIDENCE THAT THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THERE IS MORE AT STAKE BETWEEN US THAN EIGHT C-130 AIRCRAFT AND A NUCLEAR REACTOR.

6. IT MIGHT BE AGREED IN ADVANCE THAT IF SUCH A VISIT
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IS SUCCESSFUL AND TALKS ARE CONSTRUCTIVE, LIBYA WOULD ANNOUNCE PUBLICLY EMBARGO AGAINST U.S. HAS BEEN LIFTED AND A FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENT THAT U.S. FLAG SHIPS WOULD BE FREE TO TRADE AT LIBYANS PORTS, SYMBOLICALLY ENDING COLD WAR BETWEEN US. IT COULD BE TACITLY UNDERSTOOD THAT AFTER SUCH EVIDENCE OF IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO RELEASE C-130'S. OUR KNOWLEDGE OF CAPABILITIES OF NUCLEAR REACTOR LIBYANS ARE SEEKING

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IS SO LIMITED WE FEEL WE CANNOT COMMENT HELPFULLY ON
THAT PROBLEM. DEPT NO DOUBT HAS IN MIND THAT RELEASE OF
C-130'S WOULD HAVE EFFECT ON OUR PRESENT POSITION
REGARDING ITALY'S DESIRE TO SELL CERTAIN MILITARY ITEMS
TO LIBYA.

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O 221057Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1918

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TRIPOLI 0094

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7. WE APPRECIATE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT, AND SUBMIT
BELOW FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON INDIVIDUAL BARGAINING ITEMS
PUT FORWARD BY LIBYAN CHARGE AL-GAYED.

A) WE ARE STRUCK THAT DESPITE REFERENCE IN LIBYAN
NOTE OF JAN 10 TO "SEVERAL SERIOUS AND POSITIVE INITIATIVES"
TAKEN IN OUR DIRECTION (TRIPOLI 38), AL-GAYED COULD ONLY
COME UP WITH LIFTING OF OIL EMBARGO AS EXAMPLE. AS WE
HAVE SAID, THIS DECISION WAS TAKEN FOR REASONS OF LIBYAN
ECONOMIC NECESSITY ABOUT DEC 10. COMPANY INITIALLY
INVOLVED WAS SWORN TO SECRECY. ONLY MORE THAN THREE
WEEKS LATER, AFTER PRESS HAD BROUGHT LIFTING OF
EMBARGO INTO OPEN DID IT OCCUR TO LIBYANS TO SEEK POLITICAL
CREDIT FROM US FOR DECISION. THEY STILL REFUSE TO PUT ANYTHING
IN WRITING, EVEN TO OIL COMPANY OFFICIALS.

B) SECOND OF AL-GAYED'S FOUR POINTS, A MUTUAL INCREASE
IN STAFF HERE AND IN LIBYAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON, IS ALSO
SOMETHING LIBYANS WANT FOR THEIR OWN REASONS; IT HAS NO
PRACTICAL APPEAL TO EMBASSY TRIPOLI AT THIS TIME.
(IN FACT OUR PRESENT STAFF COULD USEFULLY BE REDUCED
BY ONE ADMIN OFFICER.) LIBYANS, ON OTHER HAND, ARE IN

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PROCESS OF BUILDING UP THEIR EMBASSY STAFFS IN MANY COUNTRIES IN CONTEXT OF RECENT FOREIGN MINISTRY RE-ORGANIZATION. THEY HAVE JUST ASSIGNED "COUNSELOR FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH" TO WASHINGTON AND OFFICIAL FROM MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TO HELP WITH LARGE AND EXPANDING STUDENT PROGRAM.
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C) THIRD AND FOURTH FAVORS LIBYANS PROPOSE TO DO FOR US, IN RETURN FOR NUCLEAR REACTOR AND C-130'S, ARE ACTIONS THEY SHOULD HAVE TAKEN LONG AGO ANYWAY, AS MATTER OF RIGHT; JALLUD AND FORMER FONMIN KIKHYA REPEATEDLY PROMISED FORMER AMBASSADOR PALMER IN 1971-72 TO PAY BILL FOR MINOR DAMAGES CAUSED TO EMBASSY PROPERTY DURING 1969 BALFOUR DAY DEMONSTRATION, BUT FAILED TO DO SO. COMPENSATION FOR CONFISCATED EMBASSY PROPERTY ON CORNICHE IS DUE TO US UNDER LIBYAN LAW. COMPENSATION FOR BALFOUR DAY DAMAGES AND FOR CORNICHE PROPERTY ARE AMONG MATTERS WE RAISED WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY JAN 6 IN LETTER FROM CHARGE TO NORTH AMERICAN DIRECTOR SHAABAN, IN RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST THAT WE GIVE HIM AN INFORMAL LIST OF SOME OF OUR COMPLAINTS. LANGUAGE USED BY AL-GAYED ("COMPENSATION FOR OR PROVISION OF ANOTHER PIECE OF LAND") IS THAT OF OUR LETTER TO SHAABAN. WE HAVE AVOIDED GIVING IMPRESSION THAT ACTION ON THESE MATTERS COULD BE LINKED WITH C-130'S.

8. IN GENERAL, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WE CAN HAVE SOUND RELATIONSHIP WITH LIBYA WHICH IS BASED ON MILITARY SALES, AND WE ARE AFRAID THAT IS ALL QADHAFI WANTS. HE SOULD BE MADE AWARE OF OUR WILLINGNESS TO HAVE BETTER COMMUNICATIONS, BUT LEFT IN NO DOUBT THAT HE CANNOT WHEEDLE C-130'S AND OTHER ITEMS FOR US WITHOUT MAKING ANY SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS.
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